

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence, City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

November 22, 2011

Open Session

Mr. Tsonos, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. School Committee members present: Luisa Abatecola, Stephen Furtado, Ryan Tellier, Chrissy Rossi, Charles Tsonos. Also present: Robert M. Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and Moment of Silence were observed.

Public Comment I

Mr. Tom Riley, 3620 Pawtucket Avenue, responded to a comparison made at the last meeting by Mrs. Teixeira about electricians; with a 35% proficiency rate at schools, the issue is not dollar performance, if students were at 85% in math and science, there would be less to quibble about; all money is on the table; students are not proficient in math; we would pay more money for a better job; we paid all the money, but did not see a better job; he doesn't know what the problem is. Mr. Amore wrote that students are not motivated, but he believes that should be up to the teachers; he is in sales and in the

private sector, if you are not motivated to sell customers, you can't go ask your boss for more money.

Joe Grace, 22 Intervale, noted that over the last year separation of the City Council and School Committee has been the problem; all must pull together to work on this problem; deficit down to \$3.2 and all sides have given some union concessions; services have been cut back; consolidation done; need to do more; city council proposed a tax increase and water increased last year; city looking to add a levy to bridge the gap; taxpayers have had enough; City Council looking at or eliminating library and Senior Center, which was greeted poorly; School Committee ideas about cuts in Kindergarten and sports all ideas rejected; city found money from United Water savings of \$1.7 and the deficit number is going down; he hoped to hear something from the School Committee also; look at millions of dollars in the school budget for salaries and benefits; pay freeze should be instituted; please reduce this burden which is too much for taxpayers. Mr. Grace asked for information about the new contract which he knows was not ratified but curious if there are increases in pay. He heard that books were being copied for students and used in place of textbooks.

Report: Interim Superintendent's Report

Race to the Top Update – Mr. Daft requested that Mrs. Beth Salzillo, Curriculum Coordinator, present the report as follows:

Through RIDE, East Providence is currently participating in a series

of collaborative meetings with other districts such as Pawtucket, North Providence, and Central Falls with the purpose of sharing ideas, successes and challenges as we move forward with the implementation of this work. The EP team consists of Ed Daft, Janet Sheehan, Val Lawson, Sandy Forand, Patricia Barlow and Beth Salzillo. RIDE has required us to submit Quarterly Progress Updates and these updates use the traffic light color key as a way of indicating our status with these projects: Green is on track for timely implementation; yellow is delayed and alternative strategies are needed; and red if off track with significant barriers. RTTT has 5 categories or Systems of Support:

Support System #1 is Standards and Curriculum This system focuses primarily on the transition to and implementation of the new Common Core standards. Our progress to date in this area is Green

- 100 % of our content teachers K-12 received the Dana Center Study of the Standards full day training in September
- Copies of the new Common Core Standards have been distributed to all relevant teachers
- In Mathematics, 35 K-12 teachers are currently working in grade level teams with Middletown teachers to align and adjust our current math curriculum to the new standards
- Our Numeracy Coaches have intensified their efforts at CPT to communicate these changes in curriculum and ensure that there are no gaps in instructions. Moving forward we will be using 1 CPT per month to focus on the Common Core work

- As far as ELA, 2 teachers at every grade level have been selected for participation in the Intensive Curriculum work with the Dana Center and West Ed. We are working in partnership with the Pawtucket School District
- Teams of teachers in K-3, 4-7 and 8-12 have participated in 3 full days of training to date to build their grade level scope and sequence
- In conjunction with the curriculum writing, Dana will also be working with our district on building leadership. A district leadership team comprised of central admin, principals, has attended a full day of training thus far.

Support System #2 is Instructional Improvement or the Instructional Management System (IMS) which RIDE is currently building so we are not required to report on this

Support System # 3 is Educator Effectiveness This system focuses primarily on the new RI Educator Evaluation Model that is currently being implemented across the state. Our progress with this system is green and on track. This work is definitely moving forward and taking hold in the district due to the fine work of our talented team of Master Mentor Evaluators.

- Our MMEs have all received intensive training on the RI Model
- MMEs have provided all K-12 teachers and administrators who will be evaluated this year with ongoing and personalized professional development as we move through the different phases of this model.
- Self-assessments, Professional Learning Goals and Student

learning Objectives (SLOs) have been completed.

- MMEs in collaboration with the building principals have begun Classroom Observations and are working to provide teachers with immediate and specific feedback**
- Copies of the Teachers Guidebook have been distributed to all relevant educators**

East Providence EP is truly out in front of the pack with this initiative and will continue to serve as a model for other districts.

Support System # 4 is Human Capital Development. This system focuses on Beginning Teacher Induction – East Providence is on track with this work.

- RIDE has selected 2 highly qualified EP teachers to serve as full release Induction Coaches. These individuals are currently receiving ongoing, intensive training from RIDE and the New Teacher Project.**
- These 2 Induction Coaches are working very closely with the 16 new teachers in our district. They will provide 11 days of ongoing, embedded and personalized support to our new teachers. The feedback with this process has been very positive.**

Support System # 5 is School Transformation and Innovation. This system is designed to support the lowest achieving schools in R.I. - this system is not applicable to East Providence.

TIE net Training – Ed Daft reported that teachers are now able to track Individualized Education Programs (IEP) on line. Cheryl Ursillo, Interim Director of Pupil Personnel, explained that 40 laptops were purchased with IDEA funds and through Tie net electronic system, an

IEP management system is in place to generate and track IEP's which cuts down on time and is more efficient; all students uploaded in the system and training has been provided for all special educators, including speech, OT, social workers, all have received an overview of the system with a follow up to take place; benefits are speed, efficiency, more confidentiality, less paper; more accurate information for the RIDE census and Medicare reporting for reimbursement; utilizing this technology will also increase accuracy. Thanks to Kelly Ahrens, Technology Director and her team for assistance, to staff members open to this new initiative, and to Diana Clarkin, for coordinating logistics; it is extraordinary to receive this technology at no cost in these times. East Providence will be joining other districts already using the Tie-net system.

Personnel Report on Retirements/Resignations/Leaves of Absence – Mary King, Finance Director, presented the personnel items:

Resignations

Robert Hanlon Boys Track Coach – Riverside Middle School, Effective 11/9/2011

Robert Duarte Girls Cross Country Head Coach – High School, Effective Immediately

Leslie Eastwood Boys Cross Country Head Coach –High School, Effective Immediately

Robert Rodericks – Girls Softball Coach – Riverside Middle School, Effective Immediately

Family Medical Leave Act

Yira Polanco Spanish Teacher - Riverside Middle School, Effective 1/23/2012 – Approx. 13 Weeks

Marissa Moran Math Teacher – High School, Effective Approximately 3/8/12 – Approx. 13 Weeks

Terminated

Elizabeth Balasco Girls Lacrosse Head Coach – High School

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Mr. Tellier to approve the minutes of the meetings held on October 11, 2011, October 24, 2011 and October 27, 2011, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Action Items

Personnel Appointments – Mary King, Finance Director, presented one personnel appointment:

Steven Buckley 180 Day Custodian – Effective 11/23/11 (Due to David White resignation and shortage of sub custodians)

Motion to approve by Mr. Furtado, Seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Requisitions – Bill List

Warrant #1153 11/14/11 \$1,250,318.50

Warrant #1154 11/18/11 \$ 661,071.28

Motion to approve the warrants by Mrs. Rossi, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0

FY12 Budget /Deficit Elimination Proposals - Mr. Tsonos introduced City Manager, Mr. Peter Gaczykowski, and Major Stephen Bannon, appointed by the RI Department of Revenue (effective November 10, 2011) to the position of Fiscal Overseer for the City of East Providence.

Discussion of the budget and deficit elimination; the state assisted with appointment of an overseer; looking forward to hearing more proposals; still working on current deficit and next five years so it will not happen again. Major Bannon stated he is taking an objective look and has had several meetings at RIDE and with administration and is trying to drill down on what we can do to close the budget gap and develop a sustainable plan for the next five years; he noted that he has received great assistance from school and city administrators and looks forward to working with everyone.

Mr. Tsonos thanked all at the meeting for being positive; everyone is working together; much of what we are doing is confidential until it becomes public record; the City Manager agreed that issues such as strategies on negotiations and personnel need to be confidential at this point.

A preliminary meeting was held with B & E on the management audit produced by B & E and a comprehensive report will be ready by December 16th; proposals by the School Committee will be encouraged by B & E; could be accomplished by School Committee looking at line items for additional cuts or reassessment of some items. The information will be presented to the City Council and School Committee in mid-December for review.

Discussion regarding the budget gap and the fact that savings from health plan may not be as high as originally thought. City Manager stated that high deductible savings may not be there; If \$800,000 savings is not there, we have to make it up somewhere else; he is waiting for final figures, but is not as good an option as originally thought.

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Mr. Tsonos stated that he spoke to the City manager this morning and was disappointed he was not informed earlier about new information on the Health Savings Account; he felt that School Committee members should have been notified about it as soon as information was available and he had a concern about going forward.

Mr. Daft thought that the department had been forthcoming and worked on this at the request of the City Council; from the beginning he and department administrators did not believe substantial savings

would be realized as estimated by the city. Mr. Tsonos responded that the difference from \$800,000 to zero was significant.

State and Federal Mandates (Mrs. Rossi, Mr. Furtado) – Discussion regarding state and federal mandates; East Providence has petitioned the state for relief, however, the request was not granted by the RI Department of Education; all state and federal mandates which are not funded can be quantified. Mr. Tsonos reported this was not the first time that the department requested waivers from mandates; several Superintendents have applied in the past. Mr. Furtado explained that the Basic Education Plan describes regulations from RIDE which the schools must operate under and must be taken into consideration when formulating a budget. Ms. Cheryl Ursillo, Interim Pupil Personnel Director, indicated that the state regulations are available for review on the RI Department of Education website and emanate from the federal register.

Advertising Specials -Mrs. Rossi requested a legal opinion regarding a reduction of the advertising rate for a limited time only during the month of January; was it necessary for the School Committee to vote each time on the rate or could it be adjusted administratively. Mr. Silva, legal counsel, requested that the matter come before the School Committee for discussion out of an abundance of caution.

Mrs. Rossi wished to initiate a special advertising rate for January as a way for individuals to see the ads and decide to advertise; would an

administrator be allowed to adjust the price just for the month; any new advertising requests would still come to the School Committee for approval according to policy. Mr. Tsonos had no problem with specials, but was concerned about the number of blocks on the website marked “advertise here.” He would rather see it used for stories and pictures about students. Mrs. Rossi will take that information back to the Advertising Committee for a possible redesign.

A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to approve, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola and Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Approval of Advertising Request for P. Carroll, Avon Rep. – Motion by Mrs. Rossi to approve, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Recess was taken. The School Committee reconvened.

Superintendent Search Committee Appointments – Mr. Tsonos asked each School Committee member to present nominations and votes for the members of the Superintendent Search Committee:

Motion by Mr. Tellier to nominate Donna Dellefemine, Greg Amore, and Bob Enos, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Furtado to nominate David Medeiros, Laurie Brown, and Sheila Wildenhain, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Mrs. Rossi to nominate Brian Lonergan, Roscoe Higgins, and Mike Silva, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Mrs. Abatecola to nominate Jen Wall, Missy Andrade, and Fatima Avila, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Motion by Mr. Tsonos to nominate Sandra Barone, Andrea Vastis, and Valarie Lawson, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Vote 5-0.

Discussion: Mr. Tsonos explained that Mr. Elmer Pina, City Affirmation Director would be included along with Mr. Edward Daft, Interim Superintendent, and Dr. Kenneth Walker, as an alternate if anyone should drop out; also, two members of the School Committee, Ryan Tellier and Luisa Abatecola will be permanent members with Mr. Furtado as an alternate member. Discussion: will leave up to the screening committee to set a date for the first organizational meeting and future meetings and to discuss issues regarding posting of public meetings under the Open Meetings Act as advised by legal counsel.

Other concerns about confidentiality of people applying and who would receive the applications will be at the discretion of the Screening Committee. Mr. Silva advised that initial interviews would not be conducted in public and applications could be sent to his office in order to maintain confidentiality of applicants who wish to apply.

Old Business

School Census –In response to questions, Mr. Furtado requested information regarding class sizes and student teacher ratios and advised that the School Department Registration office maintains current information on the school census. Mr. Daft explained that according to the teachers' contract, class size is at 26; he reviewed the statistics by school and pointed out that some classes include special education inclusion students and that class sizes can go up to 28. Mr. Daft reported the total enrollment at 5,534 students with some classes such as Advanced Placement Math which may not have 28 students per class; however, there is a need to offer electives and AP classes in order to be competitive at the high school level.

Update on Building Conditions - Mr. Edward Catelli, Facilities Director, presented a report on ongoing work in schools and issues at several school buildings:

At Martin Middle School the elevator was shut down and alternate arrangements were made for one student who uses the elevator daily; the roof at Hennessey School was completed and work on the soffit and gutters is ongoing and will be completed in two weeks; High School – sprinkler installed; doors installed; major issue with asbestos tiles which need to be replaced (abatement involved); received a letter from Department of Health regarding replacement. Mr. Catelli explained there are issues at all the schools: all

elementary schools need fire upgrades and asbestos abatement; there are issues with some exterior doors; upgrades are needed in kitchen areas; upgrades are needed in bathrooms to meet ADA compliance; partitions in bathrooms which cannot be repaired; no signage for ADA; major upgrade needed; there are several large cracks at the High School and Martin Middle School which need to be taken care of. Farrar and Associates will attend the December meeting to report on the \$6Million bond repairs. Finance Director, Mary Kin, explained that funds will not be available until April; they will have to look at a whole different plan for work to begin in July which is problematic since architects/engineers need to be working in January; the Building Committee will need to discuss this as Farrar Associates should be working already. Mr. Catelli noted that this happened at Hennessy and the work started when school was in session; it is important to go forward with this as fast as we can; we will be working while kids are in school.

Public Comment II

Tom Riley stated that not much has changed over ten years; there is no money for paper and soap but the budget lists money for longevity and pay raises; city resources are pumped into adult entitlements; all we hear is we need more money while we should reallocate resources; he felt it would be more than appropriate to remove that line item or freeze it; this has gone on for a long time; taxpayers and kids deserve better than this; money should be put to better use; need to take a hardline and say no to entitlements; ridiculous;

embarrassing and lack of management; could have used money to repair some of the buildings instead of excessive hiring; we don't need to hire more custodians; why not bring in college kids to paint in the summer.

Announcements

Holiday Breakfast Citizens Scholarship Fund on 11/28

Martin Middle School Special Education Program RIPIN and PAC on 11/30.

Band Concerts on 12/2, 12/7, 12/8

Winter Fest on 12/3 and 12/10 at the Sr. Center; CTC produced 3D Model of Carousel to be displayed

Providence Coffee Roasters donating proceeds to Waddington School

11/29 United Skates help Orlo School raise funds; Orlo in third place for Clorox contest

Riverside Middle School Chorus 12/1 at State House and 12/21 Concert

Mr. Tsonos stated that less than one year ago predecessors advised that the balance was budgeted and then handcuffed us with contracts less than 12 months ago; this School Committee has been doing a great deal to address the finances of the School Department.

Motion by Mr. Furtado that the School Committee convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing Personnel - R.I. Gen.

Laws §42-46-5(a) (1); Collective Bargaining R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5 (a) (2); Litigation/Pending Litigation -R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a)(2) seconded by Mrs. Abatecola.

Vote 5-0.

**Return to Public Session and Report Executive Session Votes- None.
Motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session and adjourn by
Mr. Furtado, seconded by Mrs. Rossi. Vote 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Stephen Furtado, Clerk of the Committee